Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

"Part of our Responsibility to Protect lies in ensuring that those who seek to harm civilians know that impunity is not an option."

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Thank you very much Mr. President, and thank you to the Secretary-General for his report on the Responsibility to Protect. It's very strong focus on the challenges of implementing that doctrine are especially welcome, and I would like to reaffirm at the outset the United Kingdom's commitment to implementing the R2P doctrine, and I would like to thank all of the panellists for everything that they do, and continue to do, on such an important global issue.

Responsibility to Protect is a global issue that can be seen on virtually every item that comes to the Security Council's agenda. It can also be seen on the faces of the thousands being forced to flee from Juba in July, or the hundreds of thousands of poor civilians in Syria who are besieged or under attack in Aleppo. So we must redouble our efforts on R2P for their sakes.

I think there are three areas that deserve special attention.

First, there has been, as others have said, a stark increase in atrocities over recent years. Early warning must be met with early action. The Security Council has failed too many times in this regard. The findings of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism in Syria show just how horrific the consequences can be when we fail to prevent such conflict, in that instance with the use of chemical weapons against civilians of Syria by the Asad regime.

Second, international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law are the foundation on which the R2P doctrine is built. And Member States, every single one of us, must meet those obligations so that civilians living in conflict today have a chance to live in a peace that they deserve tomorrow. And I hope that this call to action can be echoed by everyone in this room. And crucially, that action can then follow words.

In the face of ongoing atrocities, the Security Council must be able to act. Nearly 6 in every 10 countries around the world have signed the ACT Code of Conduct, calling for restraint of the veto for cases of mass atrocities, and I'm proud that the UK is one of them.

My final point is about one of the greatest terrorist threats of our time. From Mosul to Munich, Orlando to Aleppo, Paris to the mountainside of Sinjar. Da'esh and those who share their

hateful ideology have demonstrated, in the most callous ways that they pose a significant threat to innocent civilians.

Part of our Responsibility to Protect lies in ensuring that those who seek to harm civilians know that impunity is not an option. In July, British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson announced plans for a UK-led campaign to hold Da'esh to account. I am pleased to say it today we will officially launch that campaign during the high level week of UNGA (UN General Assembly) this year.

Holding these heinous individuals to account will send a strong signal to those who seek to harm civilians. It's part of our commitment, not only to the doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect but also, and more importantly, to the survivors and the victims and those who have lost loved ones to Da'esh's brutality.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/part-of-our-responsibility-to-protect-lies-in-ensuring-that-those-who-seek-to-harm-civilians-know-that-impunity-is-not-an-option